WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A distributed system provided with a plurality of user terminal devices having image-taking means and displaying means, and a server device connected with

5   said plurality of user terminal devices through communication lines, comprising:

user status recognition means for recognizing the status of user in use of said terminal devices per user terminal device; and

10   control means for controlling the display of user status on the other user terminal devices for said displaying means per user terminal device, wherein

when the pictorial image of a user image-taken by image-taking means of the other user terminal device is

15   displayed on one of the user terminal devices among each of said user terminal devices, said control means works out the interuser distance between said one of user terminal devices and said other user terminal device, and controls the display of the pictorial image

20   of the user on said other user terminal device for said displaying means of said one of user terminal devices in accordance with said interuser distance thus worked out.

25   2. A distributed system according to Claim 1, wherein each of said user terminal devices is set within an organization having plural places of duty,

and the interuser distance between one of said user
terminal devices and said other user terminal device is
a distance in terms of said organization.

5   3.   A distributed system according to Claim 1,
wherein said interuser distance is the physical
distance between said one of user terminal devices and
said other user terminal device.

10   4.   A distributed system according to Claim 1,
wherein each of said user terminal devices is set
within a virtual space, and said interuser distance
between said one of user terminal devices and said
other user terminal device is a distance in terms of
15   said virtual space.

5.   A distributed system according to Claim 1,
wherein when the pictorial image of a user image-taken
by image-taking means of the other user terminal device
20   is displayed on one of the user terminal devices among
each of said user terminal devices, said control means
works out the interuser distance between said one of
user terminal devices and said other user terminal
device corresponding to the clarity of pictorial image
25   of the user image-taken by image-taking means of said
one of user terminal devices.

6. A distributed system according to Claim 5, wherein said interuser distance is worked out to be smaller as the clarity of pictorial image of the user image-taken by image-taking means of said one of user

5 terminal devices of said user becomes higher.

7. A distributed system according to Claim 1, wherein said control means executes the image process for the user pictorial image of said other user

10 terminal device corresponding to said interuser distance, and displays on displaying means of said one of user terminal devices the pictorial image of the other user after the execution of said image process.

15 8. A distributed system according to Claim 7, wherein said image process is a filtering process having an intensity corresponding to said interuser distance.

20 9. A distributed system according to Claim 8, wherein said filtering process is a process using mosaic treatment, gradation treatment, or the like.

10. A distributed system according to Claim 8, 25 wherein the intensity of said filtering process becomes higher as said interuser distance becomes greater.

11. A distributed system according to Claim 1,
wherein said user status recognition means comprises
input status recognition means for recognizing the
status of input from each user of said user terminal
5   devices; terminal operating status recognition means
for recognizing the operating status of each of said
user terminal devices; and image recognition means for
recognizing the pictorial image of the user image-taken
by image-taking means of each of said user terminal
10   devices, and said control means changes said interuser
distance in accordance with the user status of said one
of user terminal devices obtained by at least one
combination or more of the result of each recognition
given by said input status recognition means, said
15   terminal operating status recognition means, and said
image recognition means.

12. A distributed system according to Claim 1,
further comprising:
20   designated interuser distance input means for
inputting a designated interuser distance by the user
operation, wherein
said control means controls said interuser
distance to turn into said designated interuser
25   distance when said designated interuser distance is
inputted by said designated interuser distance input
means.

13. A distributed system according to Claim 1,
wherein said user status recognition means is provided
either for said user terminal device or said server
device.

5

14. A distributed system according to Claim 1,
wherein said control means is provided either for said
user terminal device or said server device.

10   15. A method for controlling the display of a
distributed system provided with a plurality of user
terminal devices having image-taking means and
displaying means, and a server device connected with
said plurality of user terminal devices through
15 communication lines, comprising the following steps of:
recognizing the status of user in use of said
terminal devices per user terminal device;
displaying the user status of the other user
terminal device on said displaying means per user
20 terminal device; and
working out the interuser distance between said
one of user terminal devices and said other user
terminal device when the pictorial image of the user
image-taken by image-taking means of the other user
25 terminal device is displayed on displaying means of
said one of user terminal devices among each of said

user terminal devices, and controlling the display of
the pictorial image of user of said other user terminal
devices for said displaying means of said one of user
terminal devices in accordance with said interuser
5   distance thus worked out.

16.   A method for controlling the display of a
distributed system according to Claim 15, wherein each
of said user terminal devices is set within an
10   organization having plural places of duty, and the
interuser distance between one of said user terminal
devices and said other user terminal device is a
distance in terms of said organization.

15   17.   A method for controlling the display of a
distributed system according to Claim 15, wherein said
interuser distance is a physical distance between said
one of user terminal devices and said other user
terminal device.

20

18.   A method for controlling the display of a
distributed system according to Claim 15, wherein each
of said user terminal devices is set within a virtual
space, and said interuser distance between said one of
25   user terminal devices and said other user terminal
device is a distance in terms of said virtual space.

19. A method for controlling the display of a
distributed system according to Claim 15, wherein when
the pictorial image of a user image-taken by image-
taking means of the other user terminal device is

5   displayed on one of the user terminal devices among
each of said user terminal devices, the interuser
distance between said one of user terminal devices and
said other user terminal device is worked out in said
controlling step corresponding to the clarity of

10   pictorial image of the user image-taken by image-taking
means of said one of user terminal devices.

20. A method for controlling the display of a
distributed system according to Claim 19, wherein said

15   interuser distance is worked out to be smaller as the
clarity of pictorial image of the user image-taken by
image-taking means of said one of user terminal devices
of said user becomes higher.

20   21. A method for controlling the display of a
distributed system according to Claim 15, wherein the
image process for the user pictorial image of said
other user terminal device is executed corresponding to
said interuser distance, and on displaying means of

25   said one of user terminal devices, the pictorial image
of the other user is displayed after the execution of
said image process.

22. A method for controlling the display of a distributed system according to Claim 21, wherein said image process is a filtering process having an intensity corresponding to said interuser distance.

5

23. A method for controlling the display of a distributed system according to Claim 22, wherein said filtering process is a process using mosaic treatment, gradation treatment, or the like.

10

24. A method for controlling the display of a distributed system according to Claim 22, wherein the intensity of said filtering process becomes higher as said interuser distance becomes greater.

15

25. A method for controlling the display of a distributed system according to Claim 15, comprising the following steps of:

recognizing the status of input from each user of
20 said user terminal devices;

recognizing the operating status of each user of said user terminal devices;

recognizing the pictorial image of the user image-taken by image-taking means of each of said user
25 terminal devices; and

changing said interuser distance in accordance with at least one result of recognition given by the

input status of each user, the operating status of each

user terminal device, and the user pictorial image

image-taken by each image-taking means.

5   26. A method for controlling the display of a

distributed system according to Claim 15, further

comprising the following step of:

inputting a designated interuser distance by the

user operation, wherein

10   when said designated interuser distance is

inputted, the interuser distance between said one of

user terminal devices and said other user terminal

device is controlled to be turned into said designated

interuser distance.

15

27. A method for controlling the display of a

distributed system according to Claim 15, wherein said

user status recognition is given either by said user

terminal device or said server device.

20

28. A method for controlling the display of a

distributed system according to Claim 15, wherein said

control is executed either by said user terminal device

or said server device.

25

29. A storage medium having a program readable by

a computer for structuring a distributed system by use

of a plurality of user terminal devices having image-
taking means and displaying means, and a server device
connected with said plurality of user terminal devices
through communication lines, wherein

5   said program is provided with user status
recognition module for recognizing the status of user
in use of said terminal devices per user terminal
device; and control module for controlling the display
of the user status on the other user terminal devices
10   for said displaying means per user terminal device, and
when the pictorial image of a user image-taken by
image-taking means of the other user terminal device is
displayed on one of the user terminal devices among
each of said user terminal devices, said control module
15   works out the interuser distance between said one of
user terminal devices and said other user terminal
device, and controls the display of the pictorial image
of the user on said other user terminal device for said
displaying means of said one of user terminal devices
20   in accordance with said interuser distance thus worked
out.

30.   A storage medium according to Claim 29,
wherein said user status recognition module comprises
25   input status recognition module for recognizing the
status of input from each user of said user terminal
devices; terminal operating status recognition module

for recognizing the operating status of each of said

user terminal devices; and image recognition module for

recognizing the pictorial image of the user image-taken

by image-taking means of each of said user terminal

5   devices, and said controlling module changes said

interuser distance in accordance with the user status

of said one of user terminal devices obtained by at

least one combination or more of the result of each

recognition given by said input status recognition

10   module, said terminal operating status recognition

module, and said image recognition module.

31.   A sever device connected with a plurality of

user terminal devices through communication lines,

15   comprising:

storage medium for storing the information for

designating a plurality of virtual spaces to enable a

user to reside therein, and the information for

designating one specific virtual space among a

20   plurality of virtual spaces to be set by said user;

signal receiving means for receiving the user

information to be transmitted from one of said

plurality of user terminal devices;

first signal distributing means for distributing

25   the user information received by said signal receiving

means to the other user terminal devices positioned in

said specific virtual space set by the user of the user

terminal device on the transmitting side of said user

information; and

second signal distributing means for distributing

the user information received by said signal receiving

5   means to the other user terminal devices positioned in

the virtual space other than said specific virtual

space among a plurality of virtual spaces to enable the

user of the user terminal device on the transmitted

side of said user information to reside therein.

10

32.   A server device according to Claim 31,

wherein said second signal distributing means

distributes signals to the user terminal devices

positioned in the virtual space other than said

15   specific virtual space after the execution of a

designated conversion of the user information received

by said signal receiving means.

33.   A server device according to Claim 32,

20   wherein said user information contains the pictorial

image data regarding the user.

34.   A server device according to Claim 33,

wherein said designated conversion is a conversion in

25   order to curtail the amount of information of said

pictorial image data.

35.   A server device according to Claim 31,
wherein said user information contains message data
prepared by the user arbitrarily.

5   36.   A server device according to Claim 32,
wherein the user of the user terminal device on the
transmitting side of said user information can
designate the execution of the converted contents of
said designated conversion by said second signal
10   distributing means.

37.   A server device according to Claim 36,
wherein said designation is made individually per
virtual space other than said specific virtual space.
15

38.   A user terminal device connected with a
server device through communication line, comprising:
          first signal transmitting means for transmitting
to said server device the information for designating
20   one specific virtual space set by said user among a
plurality of virtual spaces for the user to reside
therein;
          acquiring means for acquiring the user information
regarding said user;
25   second signal transmitting means for transmitting
to said server device the user information acquired by
said acquiring means; and

reception display means for receiving and displaying the other user information distributed by said server device.

5   39. A user terminal device according to Claim 38, wherein said reception display means executes the designated conversion of the user information distributed from said server device for display in accordance with the instructions from said server
10   device.

40. A virtual space system formed by a plurality of user terminal devices, and a server device connected with said plurality of user terminal devices through
15   communication lines for structuring virtual spaces on a network comprising:

first signal transmitting means provided for each of the user terminal devices for transmitting to said server device the information for designating the one
20   specific virtual space set by said user among a plurality of virtual spaces for enabling the corresponding user to reside therein;

acquiring means provided for each of the user terminal devices for acquiring the user information
25   regarding the corresponding user;

second signal transmitting means provided for each of the user terminal devices for transmitting to said

server device the user information acquired by
corresponding acquiring means among said acquiring
means;

5   storage means provided for said server device to
store the information for designating a plurality of
virtual spaces for a user to reside therein, and the
information for designating said specific virtual space
transmitted by said first transmitting means;

signal receiving means provided for said server
10   device to receive the user information transmitted from
said second transmitting means of said plurality of
user terminal devices;

first signal distributing means provided for said
server device to distribute the user information
15   received by said signal receiving means to the other
user terminal devices positioned in said specific
virtual space set by the user of the user terminal
device on the transmitting side of said user
information;

20   second signal distributing means provided for said
server device to distribute the user information
received by said signal receiving means to the other
user terminal device positioned in the virtual space
other than said specific virtual space among a
25   plurality of virtual spaces for enabling the user of
the user terminal device on the transmitting side of
said user information to reside therein; and

reception display means provided for each of the user terminal devices to receive and display the other user information distributed by said first signal distributing means or said second signal distributing

5   means.

41.   A virtual space system according to Claim 40, wherein said second signal distrusting means distributes to the user terminal devices positioned in

10   the virtual space other than said specific virtual space the user information received by said signal receiving means after the execution of designated conversion thereof.

15   42.   A method for distributing user information applicable to the server device connected with a plurality of user terminal devices through communication lines comprising the following steps of:

storing the information to designate a plurality

20   of virtual space for enabling the user to reside therein, and the information to designate the specific one of said plurality of virtual spaces set by said user;

receiving signals of the user information

25   transmitted from said plurality of user terminal devices;

distributing firstly the signals of the user

information received in said signal receiving step to the other user terminal device positioned in said designated virtual space set by the user of the terminal device on the transmitting side of said user

5   information; and

distributing secondly the signals of the user information received in said signal receiving step to the other user terminal device positioned in the virtual space other than said designated virtual space

10   among a plurality of virtual spaces for enabling the user of the terminal device on the transmitting side of said user information to reside therein.

43.   A method for distributing user information

15   according to Claim 42, wherein the designated conversion is executed in the second signal distributing step for the user information received in said signal receiving step, and after that, the distribution is made to the user terminal devices

20   positioned in the virtual space other than said specific virtual space.

44.   A method for displaying user information applicable to the user terminal devices connected with

25   a server device through communication lines, comprising the following steps of:

transmitting firstly the information for

designating one specific virtual space set by a user

among a plurality of virtual spaces to enable the user

to reside therein;

acquiring the user information regarding said

5 . user;

transmitting secondly the user information

acquired in said acquiring step to the server device;

and

receiving and displaying the information of other

10   users distributed form said server device.

45. A method for distributing and displaying user

information applicable to a virtual space system formed

by a plurality of user terminal devices and a server

15   device connected with said plurality of user terminal

device through communication lines for structuring

virtual spaces within a network, comprising the

following:

a first signal transmitting step for each terminal

20   device to transmit to said server device the

information for designating one specific virtual space

set by a user concerned among a plurality of virtual

spaces to enable the corresponding user to reside

therein;

25   an acquiring step for each user terminal device to

acquire user information regarding the corresponding

user;

a second transmitting step for each user terminal
device to transmit the user information acquired in
said acquiring step to said server device;

a storing step for said server device to store the

5   information for designating a plurality of virtual
spaces to enable a user to reside therein, and the
information for designating said specific virtual space
transmitted in said first signal transmitting step;

a signal receiving step for said server device to

10   receive the user information transmitted from said
plurality of user terminal devices in said second
transmitting step;

a first signal distributing step for said server
device to distribute the user information received in

15   said signal receiving step to the other user terminal
devices positioned in said specific virtual space set
by the user of the user terminal device on the
transmitting side of said user information;

a second signal distributing step for said server

20   device to distribute the user information received in
said signal receiving step to the other user terminal
devices positioned in the virtual space other than said
specific space among a plurality of virtual spaces for
enabling the user of the user terminal device on the

25   transmitting side of said user information to reside
therein; and

a receiving and displaying step for each user

terminal device to receive and display the information
of other user distributed in said first signal
distributing step or said second signal distributing
step.

5

    46. A method for distributing and displaying user
information according to Claim 45, wherein said second
signal distributing step executes the designated
conversion for the user information received in said

10   signal receiving step, and after that, makes the
distribution thereof to the user terminal devices
positioned in the virtual space other than said
specific virtual space.

15   47. A storage medium readable by a computer for
storing a method for distributing user information as a
program applicable to the server device connected with
a plurality of user terminal device through
communication lines, wherein

20   said method for distributing user information
comprises:

    a storing step for storing the information for
designating a plurality of virtual spaces for enabling
a user to reside therein, and the information for

25   designating the specific one virtual space set by said
user among said plurality of virtual spaces;

    a signal receiving step to receive the user

information transmitted from said plurality of user
terminal devices;

a first signal distributing step to distribute the
user information received in said signal receiving step

5   to the other user terminal devices positioned in said
specific virtual space set by the user of the user
terminal device on the transmitting side of said user
information; and

a second signal distributing step to distribute

10   the user information received in said signal receiving
step to the other user terminal devices positioned in
the virtual space other than said specific virtual
space among a plurality of virtual spaces for enabling
the user of the user terminal device on the

15   transmitting side of said user information to reside
therein.

48.   A storage medium according to Claim 47,
wherein said second signal distributing step executes

20   the designated conversion for the user information
received in said signal receiving step, and after that,
the distribution thereof is made to the user terminal
devices positioned in the virtual space other than said
specific virtual space.

25

49.   A storage medium readable by a computer for
storing a method for displaying user information as a

program applicable to the user terminal devices

connected with a server device through communication

lines, wherein

said method for displaying user information

5   comprises:

a first signal transmitting step for each user

terminal device to transmit to said server device the

information for designating the specific one virtual

space set by a user concerned among a plurality of

10   virtual space for enabling said user to reside therein;

an acquiring step for acquiring the user

information regarding said user;

a second signal transmitting step for transmitting

the user information acquired in said acquiring step to

15   said server device; and

a displaying step for receiving and displaying the

other user information distributed from said server

device.

20   50. A storage medium readable by a computer for

storing a method for distributing and displaying user

information as a program applicable to the user

terminal devices connected with a server device through

communication lines, wherein

25   said method for distributing and displaying user

information comprises:

a first signal transmitting step for transmitting

to said server device the information for designating
the specific one virtual space set by a user concerned
among a plurality of virtual space for enabling said
user to reside therein;

5   an acquiring step for each user terminal device to
acquire the user information regarding said user;

a second signal transmitting step for each user
terminal device to transmit to said server device the
user information acquired in said acquiring step to
10   said server device; and

a storing step for said server device to store the
information for designating a plurality of virtual
spaces enabling the user to reside therein, and the
information for designating said specific virtual space
15   transmitted in said first signal transmitting step;

a signal receiving step for said server device to
receive the user information transmitted from said
plurality of user terminal devices in said second
transmitting step;

20   a first signal distributing step for said server
device to distribute the user information received in
said signal receiving step to the other user terminal
devices positioned in said specific virtual space set
by the user of user terminal device on the transmitting
25   side of said user information;

a second signal distributing step for said server
device to distribute the user information received in

said signal receiving step to the other user terminal
devices positioned in the virtual space other than said
specific virtual space among a plurality of virtual
spaces for enabling the user of the user terminal
5   device on the transmitting side of said user
information; and

a receiving and displaying step for each terminal
device to receive and display the other user
information distributed in said first signal
10   distributing step or said second signal distributing
step.

51.   A storage medium according to Claim 50,
wherein said second signal distributing step executes
15   the designated conversion of the other user information
received in said signal receiving step, and after that,
the distribution thereof is made to the user terminal
devices positioned in the virtual space other than said
specific virtual device.

20   a displaying step for receiving and displaying the
other user information distributed from said server
device.